

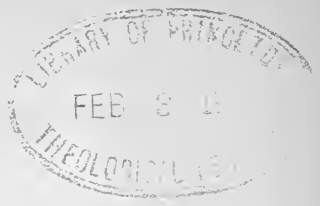
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Baccalaureate Sermon

By Rev. Lawrence Keister, D.D.
Lebanon Valley College



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BACCALAUREATE SERMON

Delivered by
REV. LAWRENCE KEISTER, D.D.
President of Lebanon Valley College
Sunday Morning, June 5, 1910

The Rational Vindication of Christian Faith.

Deut. 32 : 31

IT MAY cost us an effort this morning to realize that Moses addresses us in our text, speaking to us across thirty-five intervening centuries and kindly suggesting our theme, the Rational Vindication of Christian Faith.

His words come to us, not like drift-wood floating down the stream of time, stranded here and there and bleaching in the sun, lodging now and then only to be set adrift again by some rising tide of human thought, but like ships that proudly ride the waves and bear their cargo down the current of the years, through the days of David, the king, and Isaiah, the prophet, and Jesus, the Christ, down through the troubled times of Huss, the Bohemian martyr, and Luther, the German reformer, and Wesley the English preacher, down to our own age which has inherited all the past with its marvelous wealth of truth and its confusing variety of error.

If we can face our real speaker this morning with the calm intelligence of reason, if we can meet his religious faith with faith that is the same in kind and if we can understand the universal language of the human spirit, we will not be hindered by separation in time and space or by differences in national life and civilization but will perceive the lines of his thinking, the logic of his life and the conclusions of a master mind.

The first audience to whom Moses addressed these words was the Hebrew people when they were anticipating their entrance into the promised land. They had been delivered from slavery by divine intervention—an act in every way worthy of Jehovah. They had traveled up and down in the desert under divine care—the only way their desert life was possible. They had been trained in morals and religion in a

most practical school under the starry sky by night and the flaming sun by day, at the foot of cloud-capped Sinai and in continual dependance upon Jehovah. At last they had faith enough to fight their enemies and enter the land of promise. They had a national religion and now they are to have a national history.

That first audience was familiar with the facts set forth in the historic song of Moses from which our text is taken and must have had an intelligent appreciation of his interpretation of Hebrew history. They would prize it as his last great state paper. How natural and even necessary at the close of his great career to relieve his mind by an expression of his views which were the product of conflict and victory, of human weakness sustained by divine power. Having vindicated his faith in Jehovah he must tell it to his people and even to the greatest audience he can command :

“Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak ;
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
My speech shall distil as the dew ;
For I will proclaim the name of Jehovah ;
Ascribe ye greatness to our God.”

And so we discover that we are a part of the great audience of Moses. He is speaking to us of his vindication of his faith and inviting us to vindicate ours, ours in our age as his in his, for our age needs our vindication as surely as his needed his. There always have been and always will be enemies of a supernatural religion. They need this vindication. Religious people need it for it is simply the substance and method of their life. They have no other way to be really religious. Can you think of Moses continuing in Egypt with his people, hindered by a human government and unable to fulfil the promise of God made to Abraham, “unto thy seed will I give this land?” The divine purpose cannot fail because it is divine. Every Hebrew had his part in the fulfil-

ment of the divine promise and so every Christian should have his part in carrying out the divine purpose to establish the kindgom of God on earth. The promised Messiah has come and the Holy Spirit is given as the promise of the Father and it remains for us to welcome both and then to vindicate our Christian faith.

As Christians can we not take the text we have received from Moses and utter it with added meaning and increased emphasis?

“For their rock is not as our Rock,
Even our enemies themselves being judges.”

Christ has shown himself a great leader in his own and in every subsequent age. He has proved his power. Our faith in him should have its vindication so that we are convinced and even our enemies feel the force of our conclusion. The idolater reflects his deity. He illustrates his faith — but he cannot vindicate it. Error has no vindication. It is not altogether rational. It is not self-evident nor can it be established by conclusive argument. The heathen man has his rock, his refuge, his protector, his greater one whose greatness he respects and whose commands he obeys. The Christian has his rock, his Savior, his divine Lord. He, too, becomes like his God and the difference between Christian and heathen is a difference, not of civilization, not of culture, but a difference of religion, a difference of deity.

Oh! that true religion and false might stand apart in our thinking, as separate systems, distinct and different, and each complete in itself! Moses speaks of heathen as “our enemies” for true religion and false never mix in his mind. They are different at the center. Oh! that we could escape the delusive mingling of truth and error when the ends of earth are brought together and men sit side by side who hold religious views that are different, inconsistent and mutually destructive! There is no peace saith my God to the wicked nor should there be a truce or a treaty between the wicked and

the righteous. This conflict must continue. The Christian Church needs men to-day who make distinctions with a difference, men of intellect and faith, men who are not dazzled by magnificent theories. Theories are but the scaffolding of thinkers and when their usefulness is at an end they are discarded by those who prized them most. Truth always remains and God is always with us and hence the rational vindication of Christian faith rests upon the Church to-day, upon the Christian home, upon the individual Christian. I challenge every Christian here this morning to measure his task, to vindicate his faith as conclusively to himself as Moses did and to offer to the world a practical proof of the religion of our Lord.

We often say that history repeats itself which is true only as the same forces are active and the same conditions exist. History is not an agent but only a record of events, a course of development, a result produced by forces acting according to given principles and conditions. Let us not deify a name this morning or a process or a result. Moses never lost sight of God save for one brief moment when he struck the rock with his rod instead of speaking to it according to the divine command. He never failed to distinguish heathen and Hebrew as his people often did. He never winked at the worship of the golden calf which Aaron was constrained to institute in his absence. He regarded idolaters as the enemies of God to be punished for their sins. He was governed by his faith in Jehovah and with the best possible results to himself and his people. He composes his stately song in presence of the facts he records and challenges us to parallel it with one of our own that contains the same eternal truth, the same sweet note of victory and the same divine element of immortality.

Three phases of thought in our text command our attention this morning. First, "Their rock is not as our Rock,"—there is a difference in deities. Second, "even our enemies themselves being judges,"—the idolater can detect this differ-

ence and see the superiority of the true God. Third, "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges,"—Moses is speaking for himself and for his people. He is stating a conclusion worked out in the history of his race and also in his own character and career. No doubt remains in his own mind and no enemy arises to deny his personal and national vindication of his faith in God.

The first point at which we touch the mind of Moses is that there is a difference in deities, "their rock is not as our Rock."

The idolater worships a created deity while the Christian worships the the Creator of heaven and earth; the idolater finds his God in nature, constructs one from materials furnished to his hand or deifies some abstraction of his own mind. The Christian finds his God in the Bible and in personal experience when the two exactly correspond. His God is a spirit, a trinity in unity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,—not an unsolved problem in metaphysics but a divine Person to be known and loved.

The idolatry of Egypt in the time of Moses was a kind of nature worship carried to its completion in cosmic worship. It was mixed with traces of primeval revelation and all its elements were combined in a system of personifications of moral and intellectual abstractions. There were three orders of deities, eight principal deities in the first order, twelve in the second order, and eight in the third. Osiris the most remarkable in the three orders though he stands at the head of the third is the personification of moral good. He is represented as a mummified figure holding the crook and flail and wearing the crown of upper Egypt generally with an ostrich feather on each side.

No worshipper can reasonably be expected to become better than his God. His sense of his own worth will be gauged by his conception of his God. Low morality among heathen peoples is a cosequence and not primarily a cause. A low conception of God lays the foundation for a low moral-

ity and a limited and false philosophy. In heathen lands we see what the human mind can do when left to itself and tradition. Man is creative. He works out many inventions. He builds houses, constructs machines, creates costumes and even the gods he worships but he ought to know the proper limits of his creative genius.

Good religious people rise up to tell us that a false religion is better than no religion. This means that any deity is better than no god. It means that the human spirit requires God and only a religious idiot would undertake to get on without some deity. But admitting all that is said and properly implied should we not at once assert that the true religion is superior to the false? The false does not develop into the true nor does it lead its devotees to the true. It is a substitute for the true and a blind to the natural religious instinct. No modern genius can place the religions of the world on an equality by writing them up in a single volume. There is a difference which was known to Moses thirty-five centuries ago and which is more clearly marked today than in any age of the past.

The idolater's god is a created deity,—created by God if an object in nature, created by man if an abstraction invested with divine attributes. What a trying task to create a deity that is wise and great and good, that is the soul and center of a religious system, that counts for progress in the history of the race! Heathen peoples have completed their pantheons but men in Christian lands are not quite satisfied with God revealed in Christ and not quite ready to adopt any other deity. Deities all seem to need some changes and improvements. Proposed emendations of the religion of the Bible and even the Bible itself including the God of the Bible have flooded the world with books but not with an equal amount of light and life.

The destructive critics offer us a created Christ, a Christ, if you please, who is modified, if not actually remade by themselves. The responsibility for this process is placed upon

the early Christians. They idealized Jesus. They exalted him after his death. They deified him as the years came and went. They made him what he was. They created him. This is unkind of the critics today for those early Christians are dead. If they were here this morning they could confuse the critics with facts and confessions as creditable to the Christ as any found in the New Testament. Christ was not created by men, not in conception and not as a Person, the living, loving Savior who is known to every believing heart. Christ was not created by God. He is God, self-existent and self-revealing. As man he is the head of the new race. As God, he is God manifest in the flesh. He is God revealed and God united with man. We prefer to be rational and orthodox. We will continue to believe that Christians are not idolaters in spite of the covert charge of destructive critics who are the enemies of the Christian religion.

The essence of idolatry is the adoption of a substitute for the true God, an object of wood or stone selected by some darkened mind in the tangled forests of Africa or an abstraction chosen by some cultured professor of the Christian faith, who has deliberately taken the world in his hands. This kind of religion is less divine than it is supposed to be and even less human. It often needs repairs. Its proud possessor may graciously offer it to the world as the religion of the future while the multitude coldly rejects it as the religion of the past.

A new religion means a new God. The process of making a new deity is described by Isaiah with sufficient accuracy for present use. The carpenter stretches out a line; he marks it out with a pencil; he shapes it with planes and works it out with compasses and shapes it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man to dwell in a house. He hews down cedars and takes the holm-tree and the oak. He burns part thereof in the fire and warms himself; he kindles it and bakes bread and eats flesh; and the residue thereof he maketh a God, even his graven image; he falleth

down unto it and worshippeth it and prayeth unto it and saith, " Deliver me ; for thou art my God."

The man who makes a new religion inevitably makes a new deity. A new religion with an old deity would be as old as ever in its principal part. Moreover a really new religion could not be expected to fit an old deity except by chance. How very fortunate that these old directions for making a new god are recorded in the Bible so that the most recent laborer may have advantage of the experience of the most ancient workmen in this field of human activity !

The author of a new religion selects what he deems good original elements and combines them to suit his sense of what man needs or what God ought to be. In our own age, utility and self-vindication appear to be the chosen lines of perfection and elements of power. A man or even a woman makes a fortune out of a new religion if enough people can be induced to adopt it at a fair price. A man protects himself by means of a new religion when his conduct and even his character are open to attack. A man advocates a new religion because it is old to him and he cannot allow his wisdom to die with him. A man worships wealth and gives fragments of his fortune to selected objects of benevolence. A woman worships beauty in the ball-room and gives the chips to charity. Such religion must be gauged by its god. My dear Christian brother, my dear sister, will you please remember that the warning words of the Apostle John are addressed to you and not to heathen people, " Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Idolatry is not confined to heathen lands. It appears in Christian countries and in the Christian Church itself. Paul calls covetousness idolatry. It is the worship of wealth in place of the worship of God. Wealth is a rock, a protection, a power to be trusted. It demands service and even creates its own law. It produces mighty changes in social and economic conditions. The state and nation feel its power and men are wondering whether the government of the people by

the people and for the people has equal power or whether it must perish from the earth. Covetousness makes its contribution to charity but it is idolatry still and needs a change of deity by means of a change of heart. "Ye must be born again," are Christ's words to a rich ruler.

Other forms of idolatry appear in Christian lands and among Christian people. How about the educational institutions that have forgotten their founders? How about the editors who have forgotten their fathers? How about the ministers of the gospel who have forgotten the one thing they ought to know? Do these remind us of the witness in court whose memory serves him best by failing him? The materialist believes in matter and force and law, but he cannot explain how material things are governed by law which is immaterial nor can he account for force without the action of some external agent. Law is constant but we are not sure it is self-existent and hence this type of idolatry is not altogether rational. The agnostic is convinced that God cannot be known. This is his idol which saves him further trouble. If we ask whether God knows the agnostic the answer comes from his word, "He that created the ear shall he not hear? And he that formed the eye shall he not see?"

The agnostic retires within himself as in a vacuum while the rationalist boldly undertakes to do his own thinking. The Bible is placed beneath the tremendous power of his own intellect, its errors corrected, its order of events reversed, its outcome essentially changed. He tests the divine thinking by processes of his own invention. Scripture truth is emptied of its original meaning and then we are assured that there is nothing divine there. He regards Jesus Christ as a man but but not divine, not God, a moral and religious teacher with high ideals but one who was often mistaken as to his own character and conduct and mission in the world.

There is a difference in deities. "Their rock is not as our Rock." Their rock holds the place of God for them and our Rock holds the place of God for us. All else is contrast.

Our Rock is the Creator of all things and the author of all law. He thinks for us. He reveals himself to us in his good providence, in his Word, in his Christ. Our Rock is not a substitute for God but God himself with whom we stand in immediate personal relationship. Our God is the God of the Bible, the God of revelation whether in the Word or in the heart, the God of redemption and so of history and providence.

Yes, there is a difference in deities. Heathen in every land worship a created deity. Christians in every land worship the self-existent, self-revealing God, whose presence is manifested in the Church. Every new religion means a new deity, who cannot be accorded time to grow, who cannot be discovered like an unknown continent. He must be created. A miracle of stupendous proportions must be performed in order to meet the emergency! Ex-Bishop Milton Wright tells us that Darwin's miracles are attributed to the lower order of creatures. Miracles are forced upon us but at whose door shall we lay them? Christian people believe that the miracles recorded in the Bible, the miracles of personal experience and the miracles of history are to be attributed to the interest and intervention of the living God.

Yes, there is a difference in deities, which thirty-five centuries have not obliterated or even obscured and hence we conclude that this difference will remain to the end of time.

Our second point of contact with the mind of Moses is that many idolaters know this difference in deities and the superiority of the true God.

They are judges as soon as the case is brought before them. They are concerned to know and must render some decision. The Hebrew people raised the religious question in many nations, Egypt, Philistia, Phoenicia, Babylonia, and as widely as they were known. They were God's witnesses in the world, in bondage and deliverance, in conquest and captivity, in victory and defeat. They stood for the worship of one God and the divine presence and power marked them

as a peculiar people. When these were withdrawn they suffered defeat and even captivity, all of which were anticipated by their great leader in the prophetic question :

“ How should one chase a thousand
And two put ten thousand to flight
Except their Rock had sold them
And Jehovah had delivered them up ?
For their rock is not as our Rock,
Even our enemies themselves being judges.”

Nothing in heathen deities explains heathen victories over God's people. The divine element was unmistakable in Hebrew history, whether tested by its presence or its absence. Jehovah was their guide and deliverer. They were not permitted to support great standing armies or build great battle-ships. Such a course would have resulted in a transfer of faith. Their one God, loved and obeyed, was to prove mightier than heathen pantheons.

The divine element is visible yet in their history and it must have stood out with impressive clearness in the enactment. The deliverance of one nation from the power of another nation, the one unarmed and the other trained to war, the one broken in spirit and the other self-reliant, the one governed by the greatest living earthly ruler and the other with no hereditary or elected ruler,—this deliverance has its scriptural explanation. Jehovah was superior to the Egyptian divinities. Moses, divinely directed was superior to Pharaoh, who might have anticipated Shakespeare's poetic statement of a religious truth :

“ There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will.”

The idolater has his opportunity to know the superiority of the true God. He may profess conviction and yield assent and yet revert to his former faith. The chosen people were chosen for their own sake, for the sake of other nations and for the sake of the coming Christ. They knew their mission

in the world as we should know ours. The Christian Church exists to-day for itself, for its own cultivation in holy life, for the Christ who has come, and for all men, even those who reject its testimony and take the crown from the brow of our Lord.

Man must know Christ in comparison with other masters, even if they refuse to know him in personal experience. They must know him as a man, his words, his acts, his human life, his death and resurrection, his power if not his divine presence and personality. They must know him as an influence in history. They must reckon with him in individual and social and industrial life. They must therefore see his superiority to other leaders that are known to be human and even other leaders that are supposed to be divine.

Whatever men may conclude with reference to the divinity of Christ they can know a difference and a superiority. "Never man spake like this man," was the report of officers sent to arrest him. To his challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" his enemies had no reply. The Roman centurian uttered an unexpected confession when he said, "Truly this was the Son of God." Great men have their human parallels but Christ has not. There is more than one great general, great poet, great discoverer, great orator, great statesman, but Christ stands alone.

Christian faith has its vindication in the thoughts and acts of men who discredit its object. The destructive critic knows where the substance of truth lies and the best materials on which his intellect may act. He never chooses a heathen religion. That is degraded already. It lacks life and power of resistance. Work there would be too much like a post-mortem and too little like vivisection.

We warm ourselves in the rays of the sun but never at a picture of the sun, however realistic it may be, however beautiful. Our eyes enjoy the light of the sun but we never think of an artist's representation of the sun as affording light. The darkness of night veils it without resistance. No artist

confuses his picture of the sun with the sun in the heavens. No admirer of the picture fails to see the difference and superiority of God's creation as compared with man's. And so when we really believe in Jesus Christ, not a painted Christ, not a created Christ, but the Christ of God, the Christ of history and personal experience, lo, our faith has an unexpected vindication, "even our enemies themselves being judges."

Our third point of contact with the mind of Moses is that we as Christians know the difference in deities and the superiority of the true God.

Our religion is ours. It is our one personal possession. If our religion belongs to another it is his also, but his is his and ours is ours. Idolatry offers its substitute for the true religion and if we adopt it it is ours. If we have chosen Christ the Christian religion is ours, belonging to us as one complete whole as we belong to Christ in like manner. We are not our own for we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. It is a personal relation that awakens personal experience. We know for ourselves and we know so conclusively that we take our place beside Moses whose vindication of his faith in God was final in his own mind and without cause for further question.

Our religion is different from other religions and from modifications of Christianity, because it is true to its Center. All religions contain truth but the true religion contains all the truth. It gives us the truth in final form, the form of personality. "I am the truth," says the Christ, who also testifies that Satan was a liar from the beginning. Elements of truth in modified forms of Christianity and in heathen religions lend power to deceive. Men never search for a religion that is all error nor do they search as carefully as they might for a religion that is all truth and that appeals to the whole man as well as to the whole world. We are stirred with the thought of evangelizing the whole world in this generation. May we not lay equal emphasis on the Christian-

izing of the whole man ; first, for his own sake, and second, for the sake of his increased power as an evangelizing agent ?

The wholeness of truth needs emphasis today. We can not safely surrender truth, part by part, and then expect to enjoy its life and power. Our religion means spiritual life and health and wholeness and when Christian people fall short of these they are not altogether Christian. They have not vindicated their faith, either to their enemies, or to themselves. They have not taken their place beside Moses in our text and cannot look upon their life and work and character as a finished argument. There is something lacking, namely, the wholeness of truth or truth in its final form.

The real enemies of Christian faith today are men who profess faith in Christ and refuse to accept the whole Gospel. They hold a modified form of Christian doctrine and hence a modified form of Christian life. Their religion has been revised under their own supervision. Parts of the gospel are eliminated and parts are neglected. If Christianity is a religion of divine life and power, such acceptance could hardly give it opportunity. "According to your faith be it done unto you." My religion is mine and your religion is yours. We each measure our religion as with a yardstick. But, Oh ! for the unmeasured manifestations of the divine when all the life and power of our Christ pour in upon us and the vindication of our faith in him is complete, because we have accepted a complete Christ, not a created Christ, not the critics' Christ, but the Christ of God, whose person is perfect and whose power is supreme in heaven and on earth.

The question of Nicodemus is an earnest man's question. "How can a man be born again when he is old?" How can personality be changed? When a man is developed, when his character is set in the moulds, when his will is centered, how can any power enter to re-form, re-character, re-center, him? The divine Christ undertakes this task. He dissolves the old personality by the gentle power of his love. He re-centers the soul. He transforms and then transfigures the

man. He makes of him a new creature, with a new law in his heart, a new song in his mouth and a new God to worship.

If Christ is permitted to work unhindered, our faith will have its vindication at every point. Our religion will resemble the religion described in the Bible. It will bear the same marks of divine wisdom and power. God's written word will trouble us less and aid us more. Moses' faith in God was vindicated by the deliverance of his people; Daniel's faith by the closing of the lions' hungry mouths; John the Baptist's faith by his heroic death in the prison of Machaerus; Paul's faith by a life of service, a character that is all Christian and a death that was welcomed as departure. The faith of Huss was vindicated by the conflict his death presaged and precipitated; Luther's by his victory over a corrupt Church; Wesley's by the souls he saved, the doctrine he taught and the religious movement he inaugurated.

The martyr spirit is the Christian spirit. Every complete Christian is a martyr at heart. He is Christian at the governing center of his being and sooner or later he will be Christian through and through. To him idolatry, whatever its form or attraction, is a substitute for the real religion. To him a modified Christianity is not enough. He finds its limitations. Only a complete Christianity has power to transform and transfigure a man in America as well as in Africa. If the martyr spirit appears in mission lands and in missionary leaders, can it not appear also in Christian people and Church leaders in the home land? For all Christians are commissioned to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The Christian is himself the living, moving vindication of his faith in Christ. His honesty in business, his love of righteousness, his devotion to duty, his consecration to Christ as Savior and Lord these need no vindication aside from themselves. Health is its own vindication. Beauty requires no justification. Regeneration through faith in Christ is vindicated in the new type of man. Consecration to Christ produces results wholly worthy of its cause.

Christian people build great church edifices, hold great conventions, send out many missionaries. As expressions of Christian faith these deeds are above our commendation. They are self vindicating, But these are not the first and best gifts we offer to God. "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Religious deeds may be offered as a substitute for religious duties but the man is worth more to God than his charity, else an all-wise God would not pay the price of his redemption.

The weakness of our Christianity to-day is its incompleteness. We dilute our religion with paganism. Christians are not altogether Christian. They accept Christ as their Savior and refuse to obey him as their Lord. They read the account of the outpouring of the Spirit but this other Comforter is but little known in personal experience. We cannot strengthen our faith by modifying our creed or by an infusion of any weaker religion. As Christians we must boldly rely upon God in the presence of every idol that has been set up in the financial, social and educational world and offer to our own age this rational vindication of our Christian faith. It is not too much to ask of us if we are Christians nor is it too much to give to our spiritual friends or even to our religious enemies.

If our text to-day has brought us in contact with the mind of Moses across thirty-five centuries of intervening time, if we see the difference in deities, if we know that the enemies of Christianity have some conception of that difference and the superiority of the true God and if we declare our faith, for ourselves and our people with the same confidence evinced by Moses at the close of his career, he has not spoken to us in vain. Worshipers of the true God bow at the same altar. They should see eye to eye. We should know each other here as well as there and each should be for himself and his age a rational vindication of Christian faith.

A Danish sculptor undertook to carve in marble a statue of the Christ. For two years he plied his art, day by day,

till he considered his work complete. He then called his little daughter and as he pointed to the statue asked, "Who is that?" The child looked for a moment and innocently answered, "A great king." The artist knew he had failed. He took up his task anew and labored for two years more. Again he called the little maiden to be the unsuspecting judge of his skill. She looked again and unhesitatingly replied, "It is a great philosopher." His failure was so evident to his own mind that he took up his task for four long years. Again his work was complete and once more he called his critic now almost grown to womanhood. With confidence he asked the same question, "Who is that?" She surveyed the statue with care and marked every feature. "Sufferer little children to come unto me," was her ready reply. His work was finished, his task was done, and when he was solicited to carve a statue for exhibition at a French salon, he replied that his art was too sacred.

Every man should know the difference in deities and every Christian demonstrate the superiority of the true God. Life must look little in the eyes of the idolater and eventually become disappointing while the man who worships the self-existent, self-revealing God must find it greater and better than his highest hopes. If it means conflict, it also means victory ; if trial, also transfiguration ; if it has its place here it has there, the place Christ himself has gone to prepare ; if it belongs to the kingdom of God, it has its friendships among the great and good of time and eternity. Every man in every age has his opportunity to vindicate his faith in God. This is his divinely appointed task, his real mission in the world. Shall we look to Luther and Paul and Moses for proofs of our holy religion and offer none of our own? As Christians, we are not echoes but voices, not cowards but heroes, not dead idolaters like Menepth II. but living men like Moses, who took council of the Almighty and whose faith in him had its complete vindication.

My dear young friends of the class of 1910, I would gladly speak one last inspiring word to you that may be to you a sweet memory, may render you more sensitive to the approach of temptation, may soothe you in the hour of sorrow, may increase your confidence in the divine Christ.

Cultivate your faith in God as the crowning excellence of your life and do not expect it to increase without thoughtful care an intelligent cultivation. Do not imagine that Christian faith has no development and that the faith that serves you to-day will always be sufficient for to-morrow. Do not conclude that apparent failure of faith is its final overthrow as a theory of life, a principle of conduct or a means of securing right results. Take your life part by part and as a whole and have faith in God and rest assured that the result will be as satisfactory to you as it was to Moses.

Your Christian faith is your personal commitment to Christ, an act that is not easily performed for the first time and a relation that is not easily realized in its ever increasing significance. Keep pace with the lessons of divine Providence. Read your own history, not alone in events, but in experiences that reveal the divine to you, for if you fail to see the divine in your own life you will scarcely discover it elsewhere. God should be as truly in your life as he is in your Bible.

Moses speaks to you this morning across thirty-five intervening centuries and I am happy to believe his words reach your ears and bring his message to your hearts. He was a monumental man. He was faithful in all his house. He lived for his people and for his kind. He addresses his own nation and the greatest audience he can command. He speaks to you at the close of his great career while you stand this morning at the beginning of yours. He offers to you the wisdom of his life. He illustrates his religion. He vindicates his faith in God to his own satisfaction and that of his own people and his own age and challenges you to take up the same task, which ought to be easier for you than it was

for him since you have his example to inspire you, his God to sustain you and the divine revelations of thirty-five intervening centuries to confirm your confidence and convince a doubting world. Then go forth from these halls of learning to offer yourselves in cheerful life and service as your personal vindication of our common Christian faith.



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